



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

# THE CRAYON.

VOL. IV.

OCTOBER.

PART X.

J. DURAND, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

PUBLICATION OFFICE, 373 BROADWAY.

## THE TORSO.

(Translated for THE CRAYON from the German of Adolf Sahr.)

[Copyright secured according to Act of Congress.]

### CHAPTER IV.

#### THE TWO GREAT ERAS IN GRECIAN ART.

1. Era from Dædalos to Phidias. 2. Era from Phidias to Hadrianus.

#### SECOND ERA.

FROM PHIDIAS TO HADRIANUS.

It is a most difficult task to trace the origin of the surviving monuments of the Art of remote antiquity unless some data exist, authenticated by travellers who have seen them, or some reliable circumstantial evidence presents a safe basis of judgment. It is an inquiry which requires the utmost caution. We cannot even always accept inscriptions as trustworthy guides to the identification of works of Art. The appearance of marble does not afford satisfactory evidence, for there is nothing to preclude the possibility of Grecian marble having been exported to Italy for the Italian artists who flourished in the days of the Roman Empire. Is it not rather singular that while controversies about the Grecian or Carara origin of the marble of the Apollo of Belvedere are far from being terminated, most positive conclusions are stated, simply based upon the outward appearance of the marble? This difficulty is a stumbling-block for the most competent critics, as, for instance, in the case of the two colossal groups on the Quirinal. The inscriptions, which bear the mark of the middle ages, proclaim Phidias and Praxiteles as the respective artists, and the editor of Winckelmann's writings, Heinrich Meyer, Ludwig Schorn, and other eminent Art-critics and historians, sustain this assertion, at least in reference to Phidias, and their opinion is supported by Canova and Thorwaldsen, the two most distinguished sculptors of modern times. But, on the other hand, Visconti, the ablest and profoundest scholar after Winckelmann, dissents from this view, and he has on his side men like Thiersch and the sculptor Martin Wagner, who all agree that the groups were not produced before the times of Nero. Here the great Art doctors of the age differ, and the question at issue is as colossal as the work of Art itself, since the difference of opinion involves a chronological discrepancy of five hundred years; the same important period which, in Winckelmann's opinion, embraces the different gradations of the Grecian schools of Art. Many more celebrated monuments have become a bone of chrono-

logical contention. The superb Torso of Belvedere is placed by Heinrich Meyer and other critics in the era immediately following that of Phidias; another critic, Hirt, puts it even as far back as in the times of the first Ptolemæans, while Thiersch denies this early origin, and asserts that it was not produced before the Roman period of Hellenist Art. Again, in reference to the Apollo of Belvedere we find Visconti proclaiming it as the work of Praxiteles, while Feuerbach assigns its creation to an artist who flourished in the times of Nero. The Laocoön is considered by Winckelmann to have been wrought in the era of Lysippus; Heinrich Meyer is of opinion that it was produced a few years after the death of Alexander; Ottfried Müller identifies the group with the Rhodian period of Art, between 380 and 100 years before Christ; while Lessing, Thiersch, and others come to the conclusion that it was produced after the advent of Christ during the Art epoch in the times of the Emperor Titus. An impartial observer will draw two inferences from these contradictory opinions: 1st, That Winckelmann's divisions of the Art epoch, from Phidias to Hadrianus, into four distinct schools and four separate periods, cannot be substantiated. 2d, That the unity of character and uninterrupted connection which Thiersch maintains to be apparent in the works of artists during that period, may be accepted as an incontrovertible fact. The fact that the Colossus on the Quirinal was attributed by the most eminent judges to Phidias until careful investigation established the Roman origin of the work, is peculiarly calculated to strengthen the verdict of Pliny and other ancient writers on Art, who affirm that the works of Diogenes, Zenodorus, and other conspicuous Roman artists, are fully equal to those of the most eminent sculptors that flourished in the most flourishing Art period of Grecian history.

Winckelmann and his school were chiefly led into error by deriving the history of the work of Art from its style and condition, instead of forming conclusions by collating the remains of Art with the facts of history. They allowed their theories of Art to usurp the place of historical evidence, instead of identifying these historical evidences with surviving works of Art; they established an arbitrary court of history in which the style of the monument was judge, jury, witness, and counsel, and the court was made to pronounce a solemn verdict upon the age and the school of each separate work of Art. The arguments upon which they rested their historical development of Art were simple enough. The verdict which Winckelmann

elicited from this court may be thus stated: "Grecian Art" shone like a meteor for about a thousand years, when it "fell like a rocket." Then comes an elucidation of this verdict. First is the orthodox, conventional system of the ancient religious artists; next, the lofty, but eccentric school of Phidias; we then have the beauteous and harmonious style of his immediate successors, Praxiteles and Lysippus; after which marks of decline become painfully evident—the school of servile plagiarists makes its fatal appearance, and the death knell of Art is sounded. We can no longer wonder that Winckelmann's friend, Rafael Mengs, in order to enforce this verdict, was driven to the necessity of declaring all subsequent statues from which he could not withhold his admiration, to be copies of old originals. But while Winckelmann's categorical verdict thus dimmed the glory of innumerable great artists who helped to rear the temple of Art of antiquity, it so happened that the very monument, which more than all others kindled Winckelmann's enthusiasm, and which, in the excitement of his unbounded admiration, prompted him to write the noble book that constitutes the chief glory of his noble life; it so happened, we say, that this monument, the Apollo of Belvedere, turns out, as far as the most conscientious historical researches are admissible as evidence in such a case, to have been executed at a time when, according to his verdict, Art had sunk to a low ebb, and when it was fast approaching the grave of its splendor.

Now, the opinion expressed by Thiersch in his work on the epoch of Grecian Art, is diametrically opposed to Winckelmann's verdict. From the Thierschian point of view it must be preposterous to speak of the decay of Art during the five hundred years from Phidias to Hadrianus. All inquiries on the subject agree upon the fact, that during that period neither the artists nor their productions descended from the lofty pinnacle to which Art had been raised by Phidias. If the artists of Greece did not swerve from conventional models for so many hundred years, they, nevertheless, distinguished themselves by loyalty to the true ideal, and they gave their allegiance to the new standard with an enthusiasm kindred to the reverent fervor which their predecessors of old exhibited in their devotion to the creed of Art which weighed upon the age they lived in. It may, consequently, be safely affirmed that the works of Art of the times of Phidias were not superior to the best works of the subsequent Roman era.\* Visconti, who has personally examined all the noble remains of antique Art, and whose depth and breadth of thought invests his criticism with a peculiar authority, felt bound to bear witness, after imputing some of the works of Art produced during the era of Hadrianus—as the Antinous of Farnese; and a Hermes-Heracles—to the perfect resemblance of these monuments to the choicest works of the most accomplished Grecian artist. He declares that such facts demolish the archæological system of Winckelmann, and if the times of Hadrianus were not positively known as having given

birth to gifted artists, their works would, notwithstanding, be ranked among the brightest achievements of the brightest period of Hellenist Art. Two great events chiefly concurred in establishing the fallacy of Winckelmann's verdict, and in proclaiming the truth. The first event was Lord Elgin's acquisition of the Parthenon marbles, which, for the first time, brought Europe face to face with well authenticated creations of Phidias and of his disciples. The second event was the foundation of the *Musée Napoléon* at Paris. All the important ancient monuments which Napoleon stole from Rome and other places, were here concentrated upon one spot, and for the first time an opportunity of studious inquiry was afforded to archæologists. The new opinions on the history of Grecian Art that are now gaining ground, and which were entertained, in substance at least, by the celebrated Lessing, are a result of these investigations.

We must admit, however, that we are astonished at the manner in which Grecian Art, during five hundred years; preserved itself intact from those contaminating influences which filled the Grecian atmosphere with sensuality, smothered the voice of conscience, and opened the road to vice. While the genius which had kindled the enthusiasm of Phidias was dying out, the spirit which he had impressed upon the world of Art was still alive. How is it, that while social order, ethics, and public opinion all succumbed during those fatal five hundred years, Art alone still stood with head erect? While States crumbled to pieces and empires fell, while generation after generation retrograded morally, and were doomed to perdition, how is it that Art stood impregnable, a pillar of repose in the chaos of change; a conservative element instinct with immortal beauty and undying majesty, when all around was engulfed in doubts, conflicts, transition, decay, and anarchy? How is it that Art was imperishable, while all other elements of civilization were doomed to die? That it looms up like Noah's ark from this general deluge, no one can doubt who has seen the works of Art wrought at the dawn of the Roman empire, and who has come to the conclusion, as we have, as Winckelmann and Visconti have, that in the golden era of Hellas, there was nothing superior to these works of Art. But antiquity herself joins her hallowed voice to sanction this verdict. Not one writer of antiquity of the later Art period ever speaks of the decay of the Art of the sculptor, although remarks about the decline of the Art of painting and of casting in bronze are not of rare occurrence. But not one disparaging word about sculpture! They were far better qualified to judge in this matter than we can possibly be, and they rated the artists and the plastic works of Art in marble, bronze, and precious metals, of the two last centuries before and the first century after Christ, in the same category of excellence with the master works of preceding eras. Nay, they go so far as to declare Cleomenes, who flourished two hundred years before Christ, and Apollonius, Agesander, Zenodorus, Diogenes, and other artists employed by the

\* Thiersch, a. a. O. S. p. 331.

Roman emperors of the first century after Christ, worthy of occupying the same distinguished position as Phidias and his glorious contemporaries.

How is this long preservation of the full beauty of plastic Art to be accounted for? The first and most palpable key to this mystery is found in the happy combination of external circumstances, which attended and stimulated the first development of Art, and which, during several centuries, afforded additional advantages to its perpetuity. The success of Art depends, after all, upon the quality of work of the artists. Now, during the five hundred years which form the subject of this chapter, the artists had their hands full of commissions, and the practical tendency of the Romans enlarged the sphere of the artist's activity, by employing him upon such historical subjects as fell within the scope of imperial Rome's political ambition. Alexander's thirst for stupendous works of Art was as insatiable as his world-grasping ambition was gigantic. The most illustrious painter of his time, the most celebrated sculptor, and the most admired engraver were summoned to his service, and admitted to his friendship. He was succeeded by the Diadoches, who were the heirs to his world-wide empire, and whose capitals, Alexandria, Selucia, Antioch, Ctesiphon, Pergamon, etc., became fresh fields for artists. When an earthquake occurred at Rhodes and destroyed that city, King Ptolemæus Philopator could afford to dispatch one hundred artists and architects from Alexandria to lend a helping hand towards rebuilding the city, and give it an improved appearance. Says Thiersch: "Greece, limited as it was in resources and extent, asserted her artistic influence in new empires with unlimited power. This influence of Grecian genius predominated in every direction. The ambition to blend in the works of Art loftiness of thought with gentleness of sentiment, the Deity with humanity, mythology with history; this ambition pervaded the whole atmosphere of plastic Art. There was no lack of artists to meet the demand which grew out of this ambition. Besides the hosts of artists in the newly founded empires and cities, the renowned schools of Athens, of Sicyon and Rhodes furnished a great number of masters, whose career of historical celebrity was consequently not interrupted. At the same time these cities preserved their independence and their civil order. Kings and Romans looked upon them with infinite respect, and their schools of Art were visited as the chief seats of the culture of the age." The spirit with which ancient Art manifested its imperishable glory was revealed by artists like Apollonius, who wrought the Taurus of Farnese, and by Alexander, one of the great masters, who was the author of the Laocoön.

Nor were the Romans Vandals. One of their most polished poets said that, "Vanquished Greece eventually

\* In the elucidation of this interesting question we continue to follow Thiersch (p. 336), to whose work we have already frequently referred.

"conquered the barbarian power which had conquered it." Although artistic genius had not been vouchsafed to the Romans, they could appreciate works of Art, and the gratification which they derived from the aspect of Grecian monuments soon worked a change in their rude nature. Their passion for imposing architecture, which displayed itself in temples, theatres, and public edifices, their predilection for historical monuments, their rich habits, the refined luxury of their whole life, which is still evident in the ruins of their villas and palaces; all this combined to supply the artist with work. The number of architectural and sculptural works wrought by Grecian artists in the times of Augustus up to those of Trajan and Hadrian is extraordinary, and these works include some of our choicest monuments of ancient plastic Art. The love of plastic Art spread over the whole of Italy, and masterworks existed even in the smallest provincial towns. The finest head of Jupiter that has come down to us, was found at Otricoli, a small Roman rocky town; and the most beautiful bust of antiquity, the Sophocles of the Lateran Museum was discovered at Terracina.

\* \* \* \* \*

In the changes which during these five hundred years were wrought upon Art, we find a solid groundwork of criticism as to the precise origin of the work of Art, for from the nature of the work we are led to infer the character of the era in which it was designed. In reference to figures of divinities we may take for granted, that the greater they repose the more ancient their origin. In the same measure as Art advances we find a departure from the classic simplicity and unaffected originality of the ancient masters, and an attempt to engraft upon the works of Art the result of the new and rich, but conflicting experiences, and the elaborate theories of more thorough studies. Thorwaldsen's remark on the subject of the Torso of Belvedere is pregnant with meaning. Heinrich Meyer, in his work on Grecian Art, refers to a decided resemblance which he discovered between the Torso and the Ilyesus of Phidias on the gables of the Parthenon, especially in the design of the back, and he comes to the conclusion, that this monument was wrought not long after the death of Phidias. Thorwaldsen, however, displayed greater penetration. Not that he yielded to any other artist in his enthusiastic admiration of that magnificent work, but the manner in which the muscles were designed and executed, the refinement which evidently presided over the general execution convinced him that the monument belongs to a more modern school of Art. This verdict of the greatest modern sculptor bears especially upon the contrast which the later schools of Art present to those of Phidias and of his immediate successors up to the times of Alexander the Great. Allowances made for the less durable character of literary works, they may well be compared to works of Art; let us then direct the attention of our readers to the fact, that in the latter era of Greek literature literary works appeared, which equalled in beauty and excellence

some of the works that had appeared during its zenith. Yet with this difference, that what was spontaneous in the ancient works, appears to be the result of study and investigation in those of a later period. The latter lack the youthful elasticity, the chaste simplicity of their prototypes. The same reasoning applies to the era of statuary, which is generally characterized as the Roman era, to the groups of the Nile and Tiber, the Laocoön and Apollo of Belvedere, the Torso, the Farnesian Taurus, the statues of Antinous, and to other works of the same era. In comparing them with the best works of the most flourishing period of Art—with the naïve representations upon the best ancient Grecian coins, with the sculptures of the Parthenon and of Phigalia, the recumbent Ilissus, the reposing Theseus of Phidias, the wounded or dying Amazon—we find a grievous lack of that ingenuousness and simplicity which constitute the beauty and the naturalness of the monuments of the Parthenon and of Phigalia's Temple. But the works of a later period display a more acute knowledge of the human body. Yet the display is rather ostensible, and while we admire the knowledge, we are appalled, as it were, by the agonies of thought under which it was born. These agonies are but too apparent; our attention is taken off from the work of Art; we are compelled to think of the struggles of the artist. In the creations of Phidias and Homer it is the reverse. In the statuary of the one, and the stanzas of the other, we forget the artist and the poet: we are totally absorbed in the ideas which their creations convey to our mind.

As regards the expression of the human countenance we find in the more modern works similar divergences from the standard of the ancients. We find the expression increasing in animation, energy—nay, in passion. The Laocoön has this expression in its most exaggerated form, and this stamps it, certainly not as an imitation from the ancient Grecian models, but unquestionably as a work originating in the later Roman era. Here the expressing of suffering and despair is elaborated with melo-dramatic skill, and is diametrically opposed to that lofty dignity of the ancient statues, where even the death-rattle is represented with a classic smile, as in the sculptured works in Ægina, or in the Lapithæ of the friezes of Phigalia, which are celebrated for their expressions of repose. Many have protested against this theory of the sustained influence of the golden era of plastic Art, and have denied to the later period all power of originality, under the plea that labor was not invention. The following arguments are used in further elucidation of this plea: "In the Macedonian and "Roman era many classic works were reproduced, but few "original works created. The downfall of the Grecian "empire put an end to Grecian Art. The old myth and "traditions ceased to inspire Greece for the moment, "because she was impoverished and crippled under the "Roman yoke. The mythological works of Art, produced "in the Roman era, were reproductions of the old classic "models. Welcker traces the best works of the Roman

"imperial era to Grecian models. The Colossus of Monte "Cavallo he identifies with that of Phidias, the Hercules "Farnese with that of Lysippus, nay, even the prototypes "of the Nile are to be found in the times of Phidias. But "the works which constituted the speciality of the Roman "artist, as portraits and busts, decorations of friezes, and "representations from real life, even such works as the "celebrated Ludovisian group of the Barbarian, who com- "mits suicide after killing his wife; all these have, in "Welcker's opinion, not the least connection with the heroi- "co-tragical school of the ancient Greek. This was imbued "with ideas and conceptions of persons and events of "which no trace is to be found either in the literature, or "in the Fine Arts of Rome."

There is some truth in these arguments, especially in the last remark. Roman utilitarianism constituted the great line of demarkation, which separates the Roman from the Grecian artist, and makes it easy to distinguish the creations of the two schools. This growth of utilitarianism or materialism is reflected in Roman Art by an increasing tendency to represent passion in its most sensual aspect, and to make extraordinary emotions appear unnaturally terrible and appalling by dint of exaggeration, as may be seen in the Laocoön and the Farnesian Taurus.

But the arguments are false, inasmuch as they fasten the charge of plagiarism upon the Roman artist. In the first instance it must be admitted that a certain amount of imitation is inherent in every production, but even those artists who take their entire work from previous models, must display a certain degree of mental activity in the process of reproduction. This is fully apparent in Goethe's Iphigenie, in the mythological works of modern artists, in Raphael's Galathea, and in Titian's pictures of Venus. Inspiration alone is purely creative; this alone is the *elisir d'amore* which intoxicates the artist, and gives birth to his creation. Take, for instance, the Apollo of the Vatican. To be sure he was created in Nero's times, and the artist had a copious choice among previous representations of the god to guide his hand and inspire his mind. But, for all that, who will deny genius, inspiration, and originality to this sublime creation? Who will deny that it is, in fact, an entirely new creation, such as had never existed before?

We find degenerating symptoms, unfortunately, abounding in the last centuries of Grecian Art. Miserably incompetent artists then usurped the throne which once was filled by Phidias. But even in Phidias' time there was no lack of mediocrities. Whenever was there a great constellation in the artistic or literary firmament without all sorts of small stars clustering around it? At the same time that Goethe and Schiller sung, Lafontaine and Schmidt von Wernichen and innumerable smaller writers thronged the road to Parnassus. This phenomenon belongs to all nations and all times. And yet we cordially agree with Thiersch's enthusiastic assertion:

"However great the degeneracy of Grecian Art, it

"never affected Grecian statuary. The primitive trunk from which it sprung may have been shattered in the course of time, stems and branches may have been scattered to the winds, yet new leaves sprouted constantly from the tree, which bore golden fruits as of old. Again, as to the talk about the degeneracy of morals and public spirit, from which Art draws its nutriment! It still remains to be seen, whether after the death of Alexander the penury of ideas really was so great as represented; whether it really was such as to smother all lofty or gentle aspirations in the artist's heart."

Look at the powerful Diadoceæ, and their creations in Africa and Asia, which clearly were the offspring of Grecian Art. Again, the old spirit of liberty of ancient Hellas imparting its fire to the Æchaian and Ætolian league, which took up the gauntlet against the omnipotence of Rome. Then Roman history itself, with its brilliant array of heroes and world-conquerors—was this so unworthy of comparison with the days of Marathon and Salamis? How could a time be called void of inspiring elements, which produced characters like Hannibal, the two Scipios, the Gracchis, Marius, Sulla, Julius Cæsar, Mark Antony, and Cleopatra? Is it fair to suppose that the grand cosmopolitan vista, which the Roman empire, under Augustus and the first Cæsars opened to mankind, could remain without influence upon the spirit of Art? Here was a new world, of which Rome was the focus, opening itself for Art; and who will believe that the Roman artist could behold such momentous scenes without having his mind agitated with new thoughts, and his heart thrilled by new emotions?

On following the process of development of Grecian Art and of Greece, a complete historical organism presents itself to our view, and as far as such a phenomenon can be made palpable to the senses, we behold Hellas, the virgin nation of the great European fraternity living itself out, as it were, diffusing its youthful elasticity and power as it goes along, spreading its germs of culture over distant ages. At the dawn of Greek Art we find the influences exercised upon it by the life and manners of the people fully commensurate for purposes of stimulation, while the individuality of the artist was powerful enough to guard Art against all fatal influences adverse to its ideal of the holy and the Beautiful. Nature and Art, these were the two poles around which the extreme characteristics of Greece turned with singular harmony. All revolved around Nature—liberty, Art, pleasure, and philosophy. Nature, with her all-quickening, all vitalizing influences, gave to the Greek his beautiful ideas, and Art clothed these beautiful ideas with beautiful forms. The divinities of Greece originated from its humanity. They are beings created after the image of man, but endowed with superior qualities; transcending man in power and ability, but, like him, the slave of circumstances; like him, a creature made of flesh and blood, and subjected to flesh and blood passions: smiling like the members of the human family in times of

gladness; weeping in seasons of sorrow; thrilled by all the passions, and subjected to all the woes of mankind.

We find in Greece both the laws of Nature and of society swayed by the influences of Art, and Art, in its turn, controlled by the laws of proportion, fitness, and beauty. Truth and imagination went hand in hand to create ideals of perfection. Man, in the glory of his individuality, himself became a work of Art, and life itself struck the Greek as a wonderful creation of Art, because his mind was freed from ghostly representations of unknown spheres, and he looked upon this world as the legitimate scene of action for the noblest and most exalting aspirations. Views like these enabled this chosen people to establish a beautiful bond of union between the general interests of humanity and those of its special nationality. The character, literature, and Art of Greece pass through all the stages of normal development, while from the rising to the setting of the sun of the Grecian nation, we find the national idiosyncrasies vehemently impressed upon all departments of life and Art, actually bidding defiance to the hosts of the Roman conqueror, and with a power so extraordinary that the great Roman poet felt constrained to admit: "that conquered Greece conquered its ruthless conqueror." Neither Christendom nor Islamism could eradicate some of the germs sown by ancient Hellas. Its literature, two thousand five hundred years old, its Homers and Demosthenes are to this day the literature of the refined and cultivated classes of the world.

It is this same character of perpetuity which marks the history of Grecian Art, and which secured for it a supremacy, which long after the downfall of Greece and its political systems, and long after the death of Phidias, asserted itself in the splendid works of Art of imperial Rome, to the beauty of which modern Art has not yet attained, and upon the ruins of which we gaze with reverential admiration.

GENIUS.—All men are not born with genius, but every man can acquire purpose, and purpose is the backbone and marrow of genius—nay, I can scarcely distinguish one from the other. For, what is genius? Is it not an impassioned predilection for some definite art or study, to which the mind converges all its energies, each thought or image that is suggested by Nature, or learning, solitude or converse, being habitually and involuntarily added to those ideas which are ever returning to the same central point, so that the mind is not less busily applying when it seems to be the most released from application. That is genius, and that is purpose—the one makes the great artist or poet, the other the great man of action. And with purpose comes the grand secret of all worldly success, which some men call will, but which I would rather call earnestness. If I were asked, from my experience of life, to say what attribute most impressed the minds of others, or most commanded fortune, I should say "earnestness." \* \* \* \* \*

"The earnest man wins way for himself, and earnestness and truth go together."—*Bulwer's Installation Lecture to the Glasgow University.*